

International Women's Year, 1975

Government support for women's issues

Following a decade in which the women's movement had succeeded in making 'women's liberation' a household term, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1975 International Women's Year (IWY). On International Women's Day (8 March) 1974, the Australian Government announced its own program to mark IWY.

The Whitlam Labor government, which had demonstrated its commitment to women with the appointment of Elizabeth Reid as the special adviser to the Prime Minister on women's issues, allocated \$2 million for 1974–75 and a further \$1.3 million in the 1975–76 budget for IWY activities. A National Advisory Committee was established in September 1974 with Reid as convener. Its role was to publicise and coordinate the government's IWY program, and to allocate funding to individuals and groups for projects that supported the three objectives: to change attitudes, reduce discrimination and encourage women's creativity. The National Advisory Committee was supported by the IWY secretariat located within the Department of the Special Minister of State.

International Women's Year projects and activities in Australia

Funded projects included Joan Long's feature film, *Caddie*, a study of the working conditions of migrant women in Victoria, and the establishment of various women's centres and refuges across the country.

An international conference was held in Mexico in June 1975. Elizabeth Reid led the Australian delegation, which also included Margaret Whitlam (the wife of the Prime Minister) and Susan Ryan (a member of the IWY secretariat and later a senator and federal minister).

One of the major IWY projects was a conference on 'Women and Politics' that took place in Canberra in September 1975. In the wake of critical media coverage of the Canberra conference and the government's financial problems, a United Nations Interregional Seminar on 'Women, the Media and the Arts' planned for late November was cancelled.

In October 1975 Elizabeth Reid resigned from her position as special adviser to the Prime Minister, following the decision to transfer her office from the Prime Minister's Office to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Records about International Women's Year

The National Archives holds a range of records of the National Advisory Committee and the IWY Secretariat, including submissions for grants to fund projects, and records of committee meetings. Records of other Australian Government agencies with an involvement in IWY activities are also held. A selection of these records is listed below.

Records of International Women's Year Secretariat – held in Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Non-Government Organisation files (submission files)</u>	1974–76	A4218
<u>Correspondence files, single number with 'TF' (Task Force) prefix</u>	1974–76	A4221
<u>Secretariat files</u>	1974–75	A4222
<u>National Advisory Committee files</u>	1974–76	A4223
<u>Files of correspondence with governments</u>	1974–76	A4224
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1974–76	A4225
<u>Australian Government departments and agencies – Department of Aboriginal Affairs</u>	1974–76	A4226, W/AGD 1

Cabinet Office

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>International Women's Year 1975 – Decision 2581</u>	1974	A5915, 1238
<u>International Women's Year – Decision 3796</u>	1975	A5915, 1818
<u>International Women's Year 1975</u>	1975	A5931, CL1171

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>International Women's Year</u>	1974–75	A1209, 1974/6755
<u>International Women's Year – United Nations Conference – Mexico City</u>	1974–75	A1209, 1975/577
<u>International Women's Year – United Nations Conference – Mexico City</u>	1975	A1209, 1975/1226
<u>International Women's Year – 1975</u>	1975	A1209, 1976/109, part 1
<u>International Women's Year – 1975</u>	1975	A1209, 1976/109, part 2
<u>International Women's Year – 1975</u>	1975	A1209, 1976/109, part 3
<u>International Women's Year – 1975</u>	1975	A1209, 1976/109, part 4
<u>International Women's Year – 1975</u>	1975	A1209, 1976/109, part 5

Department of Labor and Immigration

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>International Women's Year – proposed seminar</u>	1974	A446, 1974/76322

<u>International Women's Year</u>	1974–75	A446, 1974/78181
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Department of Foreign Affairs

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Status of women – United Nations Association of Australia national committee and advisory committee for International Women's Year</u>	1973–74	A1838, 931/8/2 part 1
<u>Status of women – United Nations Association of Australia national committee and advisory committee for International Women's Year</u>	1973–74	A1838, 931/8/2 part 2
<u>Status of women – United Nations Association of Australia national committee and advisory committee for International Women's Year</u>	1973–74	A1838, 931/8/2 part 3
<u>Status of women – United Nations Association of Australia national committee and advisory committee for International Women's Year</u>	1973–74	A1838, 931/8/2 part 4
<u>Status of women – International Women's Year seminar conference in Australia</u>	1974–75	A1838, 931/8/1 part 1
<u>Status of women – International Women's Year seminar conference in Australia</u>	1974–75	A1838, 931/8/1 part 2
<u>International Women's Year – international conference, Mexico</u>	1974–75	A1838, 931/8/4, part 1
<u>International Women's Year – conference briefing</u>	1975	A1838, 931/8/7 part 6
<u>International Women's Year – conference briefing</u>	1975	A1838, 931/8/7 part 7

Records held in Sydney

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Stamp Issue – International Women's Year 1975 [box 548]</u>	1975	C3739, 281/13/30
<u>International Women's Year (United Nations)</u>	1975	SP1687/1, R27/10/9

Records held in Melbourne

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Personal records of Patrick Galvin – Folders of papers relating to International Women's Year</u>	1948–76	M1580

Photographs

You can use our [PhotoSearch](#) database to locate photographs of International Women's Year events. Use the search term 'international women's year' to identify images of interest.